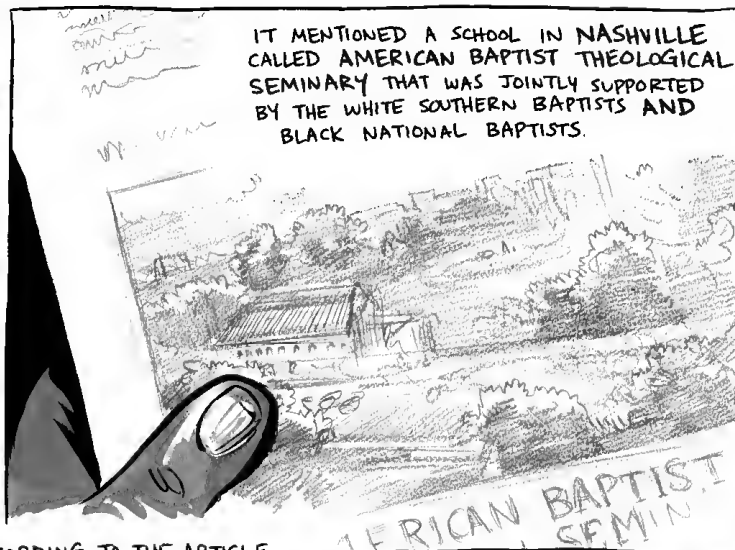


WASHINGTON, DC — 8:51 AM, JANUARY 20, 2009





MY MOTHER HAD A PART-TIME JOB WORKING AT THE WHITE BAPTIST OFFERING HOME IN DOWNTOWN TROY, ALABAMA.



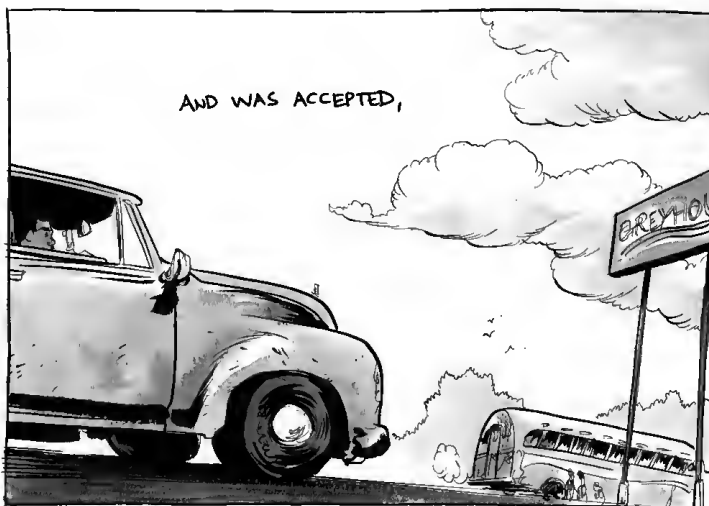
ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, IT WAS A SCHOOL FOR BLACK MEN AND WOMEN TO STUDY TO BECOME MINISTERS OR MISSIONARIES--- AND IT OFFERED A WORK-STUDY PROGRAM ON CAMPUS.



SO I APPLIED TO
GO TO SCHOOL THERE,



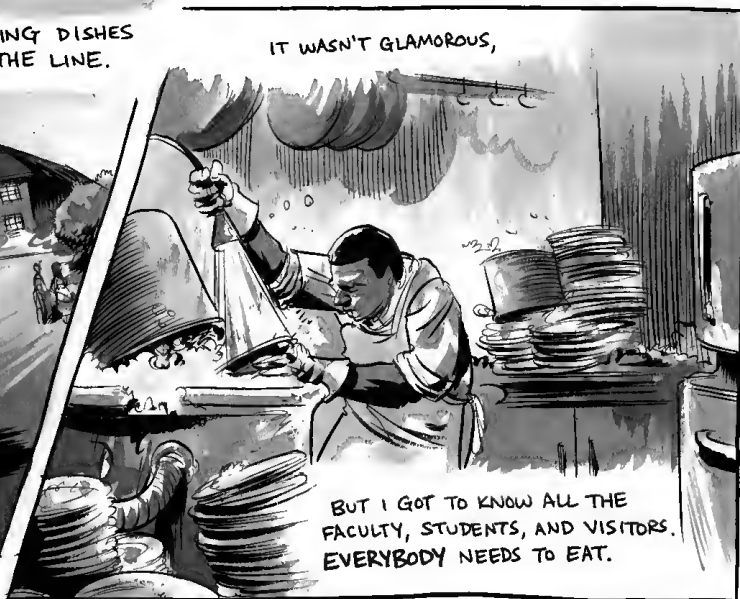
AND WAS ACCEPTED,



AND I GOT A JOB WASHING DISHES
AND SERVING FOOD ON THE LINE.



IT WASN'T GLAMOROUS,



BUT I GOT TO KNOW ALL THE
FACULTY, STUDENTS, AND VISITORS.
EVERYBODY NEEDS TO EAT.

I LOVED THE NEW IDEAS COLLEGE
WAS INTRODUCING ME TO, IN
RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY--
BUT I COULDN'T STOP THINKING
ABOUT THE SOCIAL GOSPEL.

HERE I WAS READING ABOUT
JUSTICE, WHEN THERE WERE
BRAVE PEOPLE OUT THERE
WORKING TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.



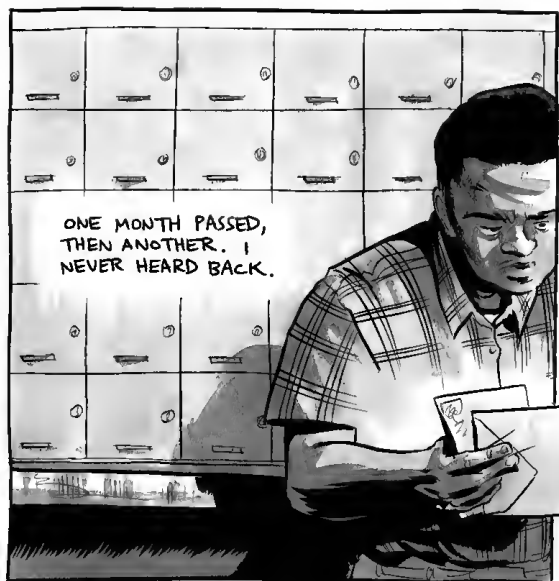
I STARTED TO FEEL GUILTY
FOR NOT DOING MORE.
I BECAME RESTLESS.



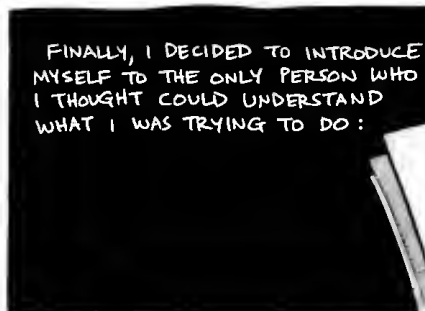


I THOUGHT ABOUT TROY STATE, JUST A FEW MILES FROM MY PARENTS' HOME, WHERE NO BLACK STUDENT WAS ALLOWED.

SO I APPLIED AS A TRANSFER STUDENT.



ONE MONTH PASSED, THEN ANOTHER. I NEVER HEARD BACK.



FINALLY, I DECIDED TO INTRODUCE MYSELF TO THE ONLY PERSON WHO I THOUGHT COULD UNDERSTAND WHAT I WAS TRYING TO DO :

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS I EXCHANGED A SERIES OF LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS WITH REV. RALPH ABERNATHY AND A LAWYER NAMED FRED GRAY.



EVERYONE KNEW FRED GRAY. HE REPRESENTED ROSA PARKS, AND WAS NOW DR. KING'S ATTORNEY.



FINALLY, GRAY AND ABERNATHY WROTE TO TELL ME THAT DR. KING WANTED TO MEET ME.



I BOARDED A BUS, AND TRAVELED THE FIFTY MILES FROM TROY TO MONTGOMERY.

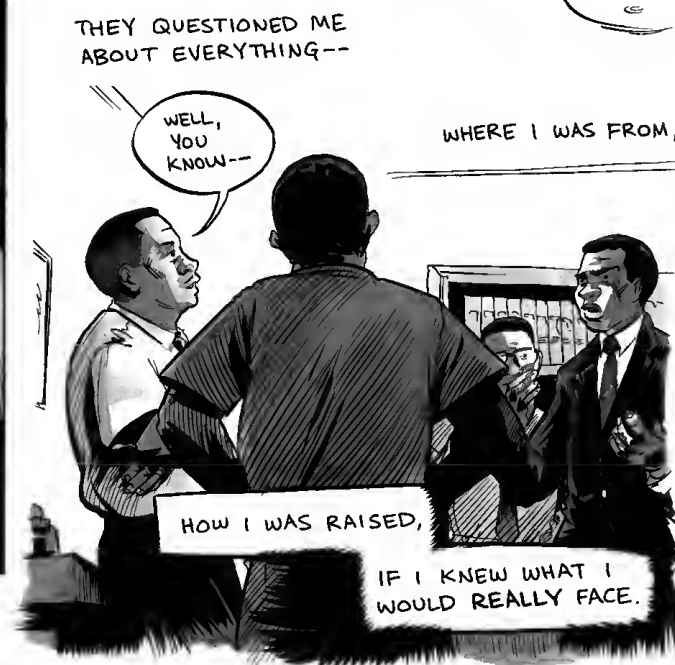
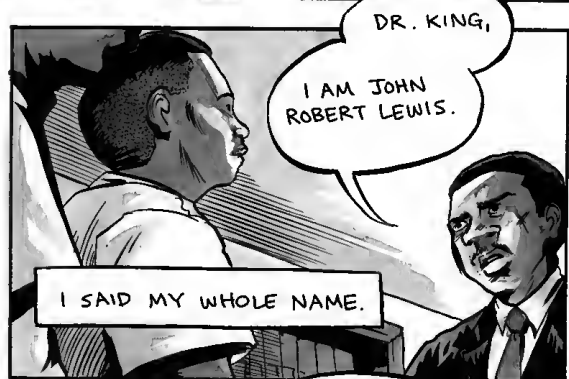
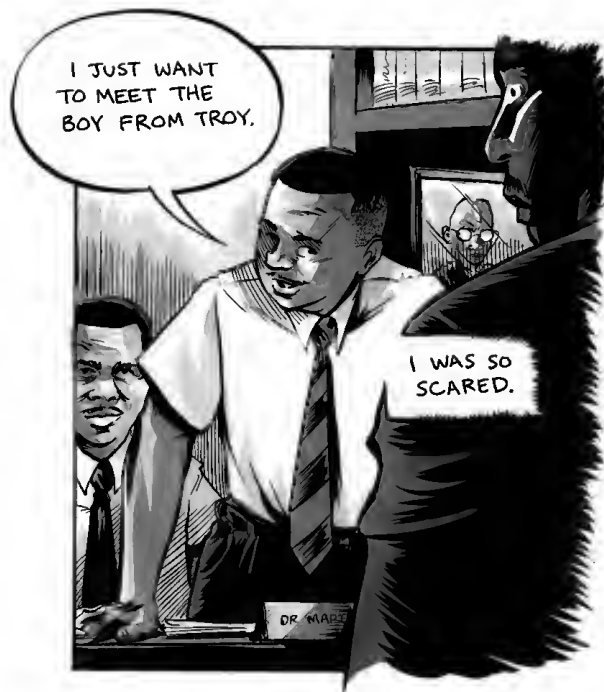


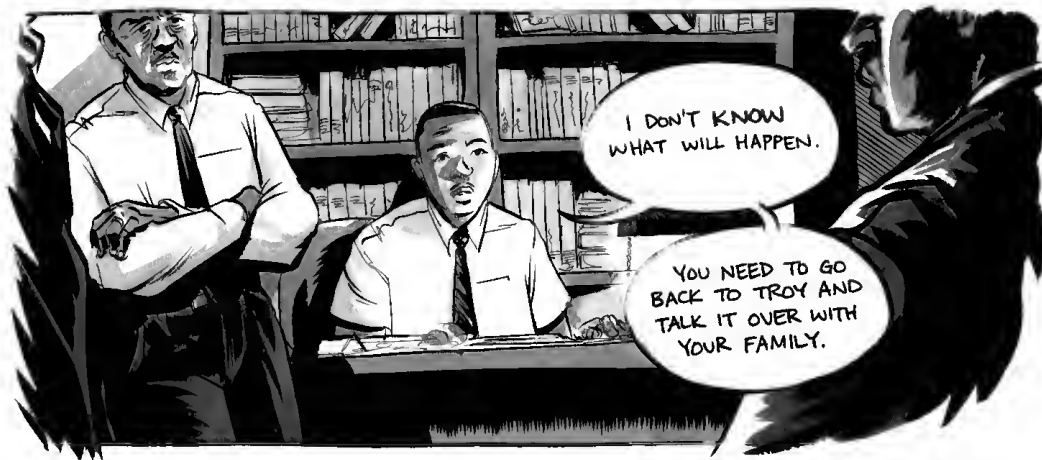
I'D NEVER SEEN A LAWYER BEFORE-- BLACK OR WHITE.





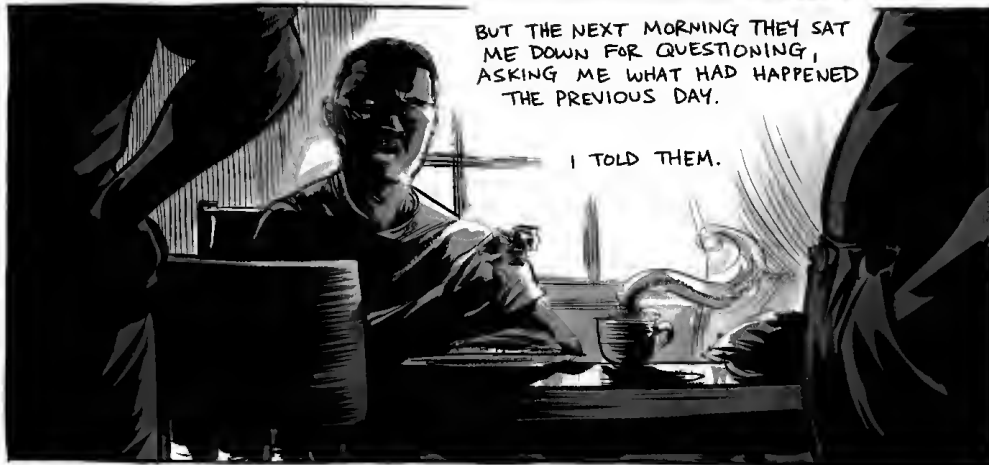








MY FATHER DIDN'T SAY A WORD TO ME ON THE RIDE BACK FROM THE BUS STATION, EITHER.



BUT THE NEXT MORNING THEY SAT ME DOWN FOR QUESTIONING, ASKING ME WHAT HAD HAPPENED THE PREVIOUS DAY.

I TOLD THEM.



AT FIRST THEY WANTED TO BE SUPPORTIVE. BUT THEY WERE AFRAID. NOT JUST FOR THEMSELVES, BUT FOR THOSE AROUND US, OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.

THEY SAID THEY DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH FILING A SUIT AGAINST THE STATE OF ALABAMA. NOTHING. NOT ONE THING.

I WAS HEARTBROKEN, BUT IT WAS THEIR DECISION.



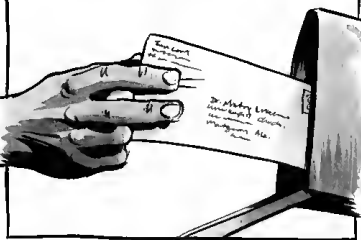
I WROTE DR. KING A LETTER EXPLAINING THAT I
WOULD BE RETURNING TO NASHVILLE IN THE FALL.



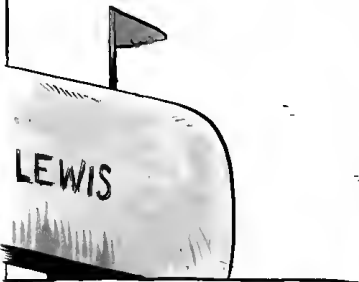
LOOKING BACK, IT MUST'VE BEEN
THE SPIRIT OF HISTORY TAKING
HOLD OF MY LIFE--



BECAUSE IN NASHVILLE I'D
MEET PEOPLE WHO OPENED
MY EYES TO A SENSE OF
VALUES THAT WOULD FOREVER
DOMINATE MY MORAL
PHILOSOPHY--



THE WAY OF PEACE,



THE WAY OF LOVE,



THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE.



= KNOCK
KNOCK =

COME IN?







MARCH 26, 1958.

I WAS ATTENDING FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN DOWNTOWN NASHVILLE.

YOU COULD LITERALLY STAND ON THE STEPS, THROW A BASEBALL, AND HIT THE STEPS OF THE TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL.

A YOUNG MAN WILL BE JOINING US THIS EVENING, IF YOU'RE INTERESTED.

HE'LL BE CONDUCTING A WORKSHOP ON NON-VIOLENCE HERE AT FIRST BAPTIST--

HIS NAME IS JIM LAWSON.



I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS TO ATTEND.



YES?

IT WASN'T A VERY LARGE MEETING. I WAS THE ONLY STUDENT TO GO FROM MY LITTLE SCHOOL.

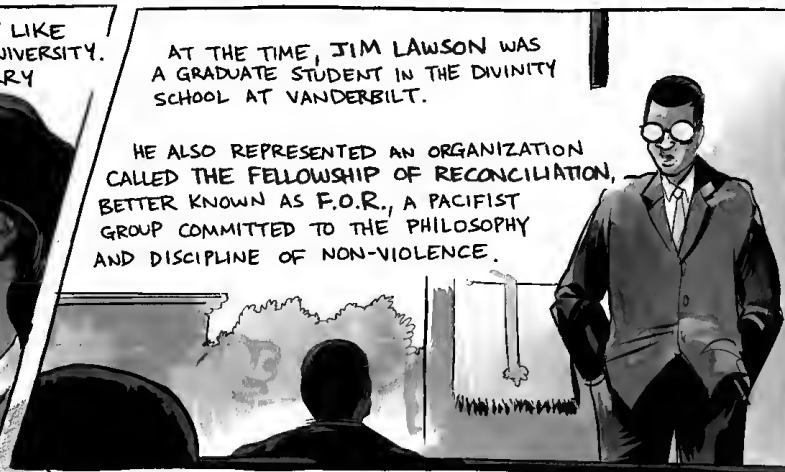


THERE WERE YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE DIANE NASH FROM FISK UNIVERSITY. OTHERS CAME FROM MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE AND TENNESSEE STATE.



AT THE TIME, JIM LAWSON WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT IN THE DIVINITY SCHOOL AT VANDERBILT.

HE ALSO REPRESENTED AN ORGANIZATION CALLED THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION, BETTER KNOWN AS F.O.R., A PACIFIST GROUP COMMITTED TO THE PHILOSOPHY AND DISCIPLINE OF NON-VIOLENCE.



F.O.R. HAD ALSO PUBLISHED A POPULAR COMIC BOOK CALLED MARTIN LUTHER KING AND THE MONTGOMERY STORY, WHICH EXPLAINED THE BASICS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE AND NON-VIOLENT ACTION AS TOOLS FOR DESEGREGATION.

MARTIN LUTHER KING
AND
MONTGOMERY

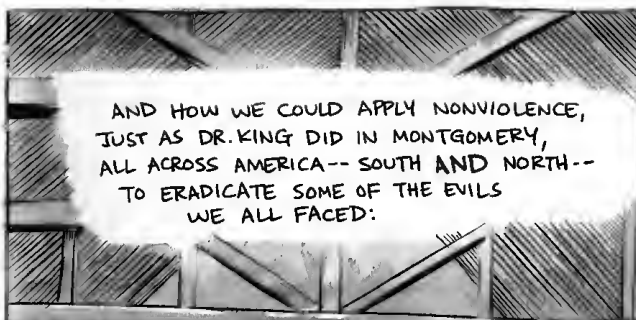
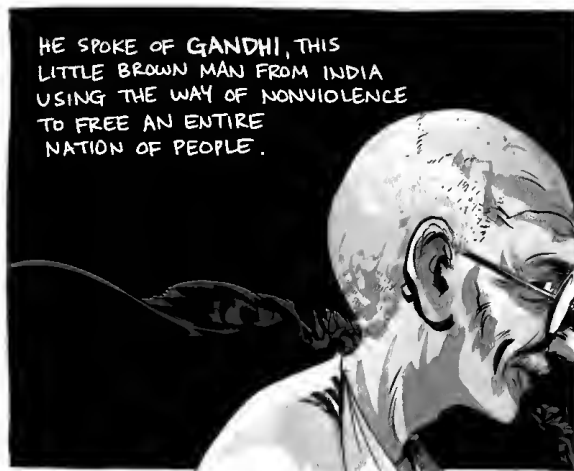
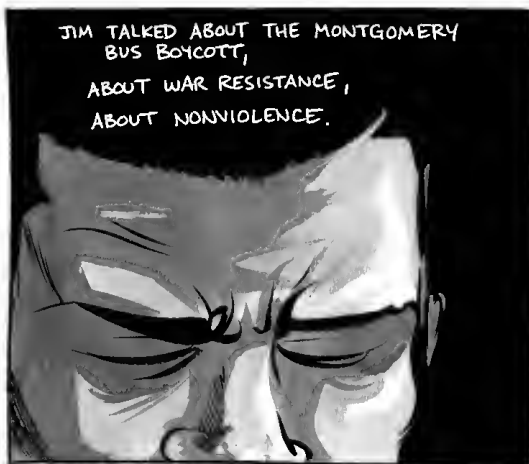
100

NEGROES
NEW WAY TO
RACIAL-
CRIMINATION.



I WANT TO START WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, WITH STUDENTS-- HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS.





HIS WORDS LIBERATED ME.

I THOUGHT, THIS IS IT...

THIS IS THE WAY OUT.

